

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 27

By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Cecelia Antoinette Nabrit Adkins of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Cecelia Antoinette Nabrit Adkins of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Cecelia Adkins was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on September 3, 1923, Cecelia Nabrit was the youngest of eight children born to Dr. and Mrs. James Nabrit, Sr., and she married her high school sweetheart, John W. Adkins, in 1944; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Adkins graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Fisk University in 1943, and joined the accounting department of the Sunday School Publishing Board of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; and

WHEREAS, during the next thirty-two years, she became the first woman to serve as the Sunday School Publishing Board's chief accountant, the first woman to serve as its chief fiscal agent, and in 1975, she was named Executive Director of the Sunday School Publishing Board, thereby becoming the first woman in the world to head a denominational publishing house; and

WHEREAS, Cecelia Adkins served with acumen and alacrity as Executive Director until her retirement in 1996, serving fifty-three years with the same employer. During her tenure as Executive Director she organized the financing for and supervised the design and construction of the Baptist World Center of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., which serves as the headquarters for the denomination; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Adkins was the first woman member of the Protestant Church-owned Publisher's Association and the first African-American named to its executive committee; in 1990, she became the first woman and African-American to serve as its president; and

WHEREAS, Cecilia Adkins was also the first woman to serve on the Board of Directors of the Nashville Branch of the Federal Reserve Board of Atlanta, serving twice as its chairman; additionally, she was the first African-American woman to serve on the Metro Nashville Board of Education and the first woman to serve as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, active in civic affairs, Mrs. Adkins devoted her considerable talents to such organizations as the United Way Board, the Council of Community Agencies, the Nashville Convention Center, the Blue Ribbon Committee to Plan the Current Metro Airport, Nashville Chapter of the National Council of Christians and Jews, the Metro Charter Revision Committee, Advisory Board of Citizens Bank, the YMCA, and Travelers Aid Society of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, this exemplary woman was the recipient of numerous awards and honors from many organizations and churches, including one of the inaugural awards from the Nashville Academy of Women of Achievement; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Adkins was an avid bridge player, hostess, world-traveler, and active in a number of social organizations, including the Ninettes, the Nashville Chapter, Links Incorporated, and she was an honorary member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Cecelia Adkins was an active and devout member of the Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, which she served faithfully for many years as organist and choir director; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Adkins was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Cecelia Adkins enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband, the late John Willis Adkins, and she was also preceded in death by her parents, Dr. and Mrs. James Nabrit, Sr., and seven siblings, James, Jr., Samuel M., Margaret M. Curry, Ann N. Young, Gertrude N. Thomas, Henry C., and Lois N. Clark; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Adkins is survived by a loving family, including two sisters-in-law, Mrs. Vernice Nabrit and Mrs. Cornelia Adkins; nieces and nephews, James M. (Jacqueline) Nabrit III, Etta (James) Young, Henry (Amanda) Nabrit, Jr., Cynthia Clark (Claude) Matthews, William (Shelia) Taylor, John Hubert (Shelia) Clark, Jr., Barbara (Harvard) Stephens, Charles (Paula) Nabrit, Willis Adkins, and Michael Adkins; a number of great nieces and nephews, a beloved god-daughter, Ruth E. Anderson, and a host of friends; and

WHEREAS, Cecelia Adkins leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Cecelia Antoinette Nabrit Adkins, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Adkins.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.